DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 145 552 EA 010 019

AUTHOR Schmuck, Richard A.
TITLE Professional Development Challenges for Educational Administrators: A Culminating Summary of Conference Themes.
PUB DATE Aug 77
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the National Conference of the Australian Council for Educational Administration (4th, Brisbane, Qld., Australia, August 21-26, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Role; Change Strategies; *Educational Administration; Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; Organizational Climate; *Organizational Development; *Staff Improvement

ABSTRACT

Among the primary social pressures on schools to change are the demands for individualization, relevance, accountability, educational technology, and humanizing relationships. These five pressures challenge the educational administrator and offer categories in which to plan professional development activities. The adaptive school is an avenue for establishing a supportive social environment for professional development. The administrator's challenge is to enable that professional environment to come into existence and flourish. Formative evaluation is a key for launching a collaborative problem solving, school improvement effort. One challenge for the administrator is to stimulate, encourage, and maintain constructive caring and sharing. Second, the administrator is responsible for improving the quality of life of students. Third, administrators must be concerned with the school-community interface as a special problem of professional development strategy. Organization development (OD) has promise as a school development strategy, but it is no panacea. Patience and hard work are required; OD represents only a piece of the action. (Author/JG)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED145552

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Richard A Schmuck

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

Professional Development Challenges for Educational Administrators:

A Culminating Summary of Conference Themes

by

Richard A. Schmuck, Ph.D.
Professor of Educational Psychology and
Co-Director of Program on Strategies of Organizational Change
Center for Educational Policy and Management
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97401

EA 010 019

Professional Development Challenges for Educationa Administrators:
A Culminating Summary of Conference Themes

by
Richard A. Schmuck

My role at this conference has not been unlike some aspects, of the role I often take when helping school staffs improve their organizational processes in total by collecting a great deal of information about the staff and how it functions and then searching for succinct, clear summary themes when feeding back helpful information for problem solving to the staff. I myself filter the array of data attempting, as I do, to specify those themes most basic and fundamental to the staff's organizational functioning.

This week I have been acting in ways similar to the organizational consultant making a diagnosis. I have been doing a number of things to get in touch with the multiple currents of the conference. It has not been easy. I have studied, indeed read and reread, all of the main speakers' papers and I have listened carefully to their presentations and to the question and answer periods after each of the presentations. And I must say that I have been as impressed as most of you have been. I attended three small group sessions, those by Keller, Duncan, and Mellor and was stimulated by and became involved in each of them. On the second day, I started to collect the recorders' reports of all small group sessions, spending 3 hours mulling over them. On the middle day of the conference when I received another batch of summaries I had energy enough only to read half of them and as the conference progressed, and the reports piled up, I found myself feeling more and more overloaded and perplexed by the multiple issues. How in the world, I thought, could I adequately summarize this Potpurri of complex issues and themes?

This experience as the culminating speaker who is obliged to pull the threads together has indeed reinforced and personalized a social psychological dynamic for me, that being the power of the role embedded in a social structure and defined by particular norms. Without these aspects of the social environment this week in this temporary society I would have acted much as most of you have, relating in a more relaxed manner at each of the major sessions. Indeed, my being in this role this week has been a very important professional development experience for me. Perhaps, there are some implications here for one strategy for helping educational administrators to grow professionally.

I suppose that I have been most perplexed by two overarching, overlapping, and sometimes confusing themes in this conference. On the one hand, some of our major papers and small group discussions have dealt mostly with the teachers as the primary target of professional development with the administrators being placed in an enabling role. On the other hand, other major papers and small group discussions focused on the professional development of we administrators ourselves. I have attempted to combine the two themes in my summary, primarily because I believe it makes sense to combine them. Indeed, I submit that the most powerful professional development for administrators will occur over the next decade for those administrators who join with their teachers in programs of collaborative professional development. But, perhaps I am getting too much ahead of my summary so let me turn now to some of the overriding themes or messages of this conference.

Key Themes of the Major Speakers

What I have attempted to do in the following succinct summary is to specify only generalizations that appear in two or more papers. Necessarily I have been forced to eliminate the unique ideas of individuals, choosing instead to search for some agreed upon directions that we in educational administration might follow in our pursuit of Professional Development. What I have come up with might be referred to as professional development challenges. My initial list is comprised of three rubics of such challenges:

(1) First is the matter of environmental complexity and the pressures everywhere for change. The speakers generally concur that schools are facing matters of unprecedented complexity. Rapidly increasing social interdependence, cultural diversity, and intergroup conflict accompany a multitude of demands and expectations that continue to impinge on our schools. It is as though the school is the stage on which many of society's strains, cleavages, and tensions are acted out. Moreover, no matter what the area of belief, value, behavior, or tradition, the knowledge gatherers, the researchers, as well as the mass media often challenge accustomed ways of thinking and behaving with new information. The result is that the modern citizen can take less for granted and must maintain fewer unquestioned and unquestionable assumptions and patterns of behavior. Thus, the rapid technological and knowledge advances of our modern world have brought new demands on educators to make the traditional value of schools a new and challenging reality.

Among the primary and most immediate social pressures on schools which prod them to change are: (a) First, the growing recognition and understanding that individuals learn in different ways and at different rates. This is the demand for individualization; (b) Second,

the growing view that some required school subjects have little relevance and meaning to the world that students will face after graduation. This is the challenge of relevance in education and is linked at this time to interests in improved career and vocational guidance; (c) Next, the increasing demand that teachers and schools be evaluated using more scientific methods; hence the interest in behavioral objectives, systematic assessment, and programmed-planning-and-budgeting systems. This is the demand for accountability; (d) Next, the growing recognition that television, movies, audio tapes, and written programs of instruction can be effective substitutes for the teacher has introduced a demand for more uses of educational technology; and (e) Finally, the criticisms from many citizens that schools are too cold and impersonal and that students are not treated with respect and empathy represents a widespread concern for humanizing relationships within the school.

These five pressures for school change present strong challenges to educational administrators to learn more about individualization, career guidance, accountability, technology, and humanistic procedures. They also offer the administrator categories in which to plan professional development offerings for his or her staff.

(2) The second core theme of the conference has concerned what several speakers referred to as the Adaptive School. The adaptive school has the capacity within itself to solve its own problems. It is receptive to the pressures for change that emanate from the environment; it can mobilize its internal resources for problem solving; and it can respond effectively and efficiently in pursuit of its educational and organizational goals. The adaptive school has the capacity to adopt, adapt, create, or reject innovative organizational and curricular practices. Several speakers during the conference invited us to look at movement toward the adaptive school as an avenue for establishing a supportive social environment for professional development. In my own work, my colleagues and I have conceived of the adaptive school as having norms and structures in support of systematic diagnosis, proactive retrieval of resources, and collaborative problem solving. During this conference, the theme of the adaptive school was undergirded by the following three concerns:

(A) First was the redistribution of power downward and outward from the top and center. This was discussed in terms of more power to the local school to determine its goals and programs; more power to the teachers to determine their own professional development; and more power made available to students and parents in giving shape to the educational process. I believe that a polyarchic concept of power is what several speakers had in mind in which all school participants would ideally gain in their influence on and commitment to new educational programs.

(B) Second, cultural pluralism represents a growing fact of life and must be appreciated as such in our local schools. Thus the needs are great for the establishment of more flexible norms about school curriculum, personnel, and traditions and for increased communication and problem solving about matters of equity and the like.

(C) Third, interpersonal caring represents an absolutely essential feature of the adaptive school, especially caring for the students. The speakers tended to agree too that an ingredient of successful school-based professional development is teachers caring for one another, especially in relation to the aims and goals of the school. Buber's concept of the I-Thou relationship in contrast to the I-It or role-to-role relationship is a useful indicator of caring.

Helping to establish the adaptive school offers a serious challenge to the educational administrator for professional development. The social dynamics of redistributing power, legitimizing pluralism, and facilitating caring offer rubics of events from which to plan professional development activities.

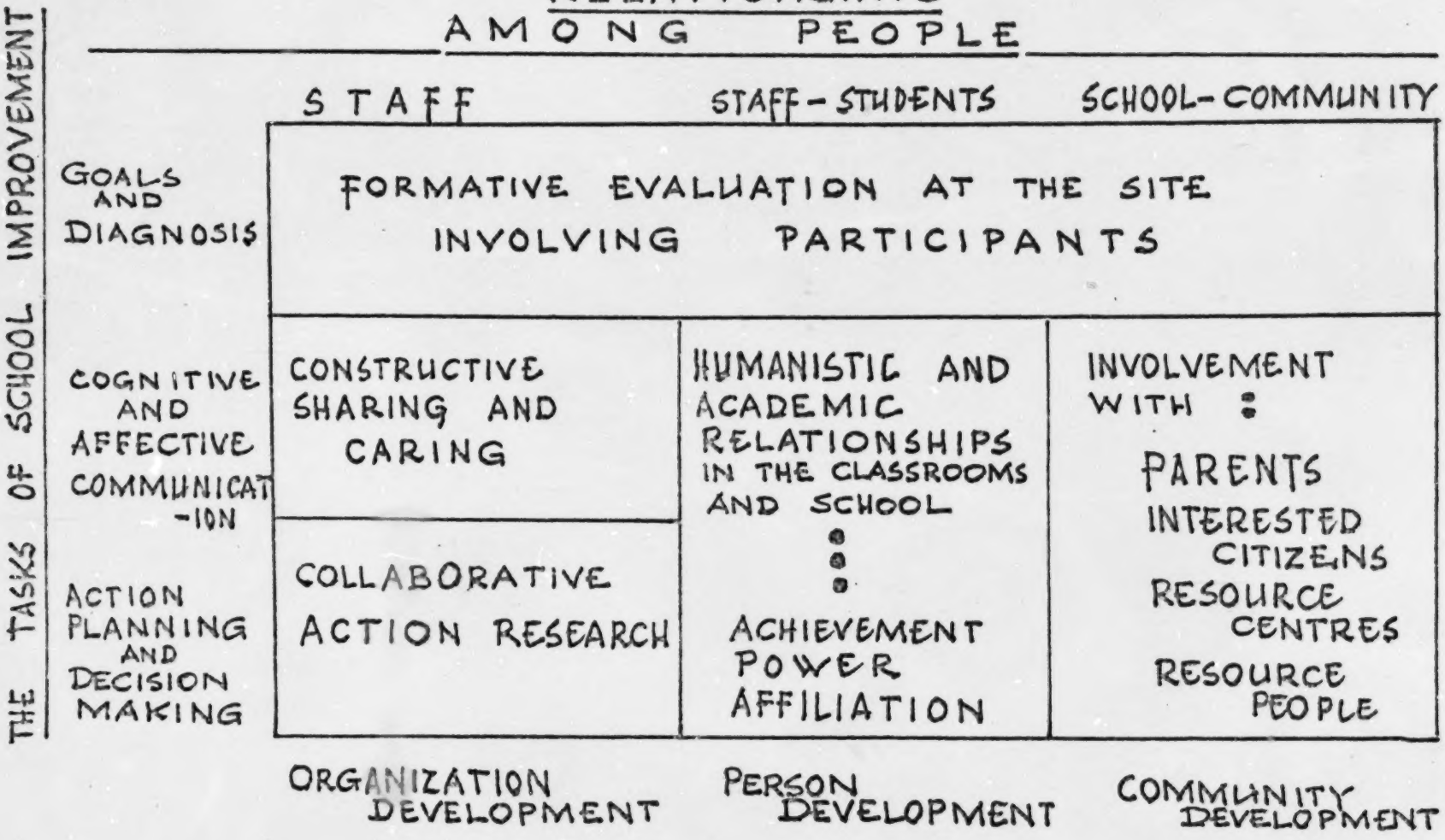
(3) The third category of generalizations made by the major speakers has to do with School-Based Professional Development. A significant feature of the adaptive school is its culture of inspiration and support for professional growth programs. It is this last key theme that helped me bring together many of the ideas and concerns of the special interest small groups.

The School-Based Professional Development Matrix

A significant leverage for the professional development of both administrators and teachers can be found in the quality of the professional environment of the local school. The administrator's challenge is to enable that professional environment to come into existence and to flourish. I have constructed a rudimentary category system that I believe summarizes the lion's share of the basic ideas reported in the special interest groups and ideas that I heard being discussed in informal gatherings during the conference.

Figure 1

THE SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MATRIX



Notice in the above matrix that the columns represent the people part of school life. They constitute those sets of social relationships that I judge to be particularly relevant for the establishment of a supportive, stimulating, and humane school environment. The rows embody the particular genotypic tasks for administrators as they attempt to upgrade the professional environment of the school. They constitute the primary stages of an organizational problem-solving process. As these activities are carried out by the participants represented by the columns the school moves toward a heightened state of adaptability. When we look inside the matrix we find some of the specific areas of professional development focused upon in the special interest groups.

Let us look at each part of this matrix for a minute. I have placed formative evaluation across all three columns because a thorough internal school review would include organizational, educational, and community matters. My analyses of the special interest groups indicated that four of them for certain and perhaps more focused on this topic. I read many conferees as saying that this is a key area for professional development during the next few years. In particular, it is key for launching a collaborative problem solving, school improvement effort within a staff.

Moving down the first column on the left we see that the challenge of the administrator is to stimulate, encourage, and maintain constructive sharing and caring. This combines attention to information and feelings, and is the foundation upon which problem solving and self renewal can be based. Collaborative action research located in the cell just below constitutes a process of using descrepancy data to plan, implement, and assess school improvement efforts. Taken together the contents of column 1 constitute the ingredients of an organization development. Over 1/3 of the special interest groups focused on one aspect or another of organization development. Indeed the interest in this topic was so high that a special informal seminar on OD took place yesterday with approximately 20 of us participating for just under an hour.

Turning to the middle column, the matrix charges the administrator with the professional development goal of improving the quality of life of the students. One of the speakers stressed this point and my informal conversations with many of you taught me the significance of this point for most of you. I have added three criteria for assessing the quality of staff-student relationships and for understanding the dynamics of self development. Personal growth, in other words, is enhanced as individuals gain feelings of competence, influence, and emotional-security. While only two of the special interest groups focused as such on the classroom, some of the other groups having started with either staff relationships, school-community relations, or professional development centers often crept over into a discussion of teachers and students

in the classroom. This middle column I have labeled person development; by and large these proceedings, while mentioning students, gave relatively little in depth time to staff-student relationships.

Finally, the third column urges eduacational administrators to be concerned with the school-community interface as a special problem of professional development. Notice that I have included here contacts between the school and resource centers such as teacher centers and professional development centers. Thus, the adaptive school will plan for how it wants to use these outside resources. It will proactively retrieve the sorts of information and skills that would support school improvement. There appeared to be considerable interest in the special interest groups on the contents of this column with perhaps as much as 1/4 of total small group time being spent on it.

Organization Development as School-Based Professional Development

As you might imagine it has been highly rewarding to me to see such a strong interest in organization development both at this conference and throughout Australia. After all I have spent the lion's share of my professional career sweating over this topic and some of my very best collaboration has been carried out with my very close colleague and friend, Philip Runkel. I am enthusiastic about the attempts that are being made to use OD theory and techniques in Australia and I have been heartened to see numbers of individuals beginning to do local research on its processes and effects. During this past three week period alone with our travels from Melbourne through Canberra and Sydney to Brisbane I have had direct face-to-face contact with over 500 Australian educators with interest in OD. The groundswell is magnificent.

Why, we might ask, is there this serious and pervasive interest at this time in OD in Australia? Well perhaps it has been made obvious by the themes of many of the speakers and small groups this week. The contemporary concatenation of changes in Australia brings together the social demands of interdependence, complexity, pluralism and localism. Fueled by the traditional Australian norm in support of equality and by the growing awareness that democractic centralism should gradually give way to participatory democracy, OD takes on an appropriateness; perhaps an appropriateness virtually unique to America and Australia at this time. Organization development is also, of course, well-supported by your own research reported earlier this week showing that school-based inservice offers the most promise for the growth and development of the educational profession in Australia.

But certainly I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to issue a few friendly caveats about the promise of organization development as a school development strategy.

First, I have heard people at this conference along with others in Australia and America say that they have had a lot of OD already--that they have taken a course or two and therefore have had OD. I am not at all sure what each of these people mean except possibly that they have been introduced to OD concepts and techniques. But, at the same time, it is quite likely that they have not "had OD," as they put it. Organizational development is education for an organization or a team within the organization. It is not a set of activities that one experiences outside the presence of those with whom he or she has task interdependence. Thus, it would be more correct to say "I was the member of a school staff that went through and OD design" or "I was the department head of an English department that experienced some team-building consultation."

Second, organization development is planned and sustained, lasting for a year or more depending on the size and complexity of the organization. It is not a weekend workshop or a one-shot event.

Third, organization development is not, at this time at least, a strategy that applies to every school in every locale at every point in time. In short, stop looking for a panacea if you are. One of you asked me if I were still as keen on OD as I used to be. You will recall that I answered "for some schools, using some designs, carried out by some consultants, at some points in time. Your reply was "Fair enough, you're learning more about it!" That is right and for those of you who want to know what our R and D team at Oregon has been learning should read our forthcoming Second Handbook of Organization Development in Schools.

Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, even though organization development can work--indeed it does work in many schools--movements toward participatory democracy, collaborative collegial problem solving, parent-teacher-student collaboration and the like will not quickly happen. Moreover, our well entrenched educational systems will not quickly move from hierarchical to democractic, from centralist to perpheralist, from bureaucratic to humanistic, and the like. The motto of the University of Oregon may be that "Men move mountains," but I have seldom seen that happen. A few leopards here or there may be loosing their spots but it will be a long while before the spots evolve out of the species. Patience is required; patience and dedicated hard work. OD represents only a piece of the action. We must ask again and again, "what is working and what must we do next?"

On the horizon for me--my next central challenge for my own professional development--is to develop the concepts and techniques required to bring students and adult citizens more centrally into the organizational life of the school. It is a challenge that I would like to report to you on in about five, perhaps ten, years. Already, we have developed a confrontation strategy for parents and teachers in conflict and a high school curriculum in organizational psychology for students, but these are only starters. The challenge of my own professional development is set before me.

From the Mouths of Babes . . . .

I would like to complete my paper with two personal and true stories--the first comical, the second serious.

Allen, my son, is responsible for the first story. He came up to me one day about one year ago and wanted to know if I would like to hear a story. I replied, "sure, OK, but I do have to get back to work soon." "OK," he said. "Well, Allen said, "there was this guy who was hiking on the desert with his burro and he came up to this watering hole to take a drink and after he drank the burro asked for some water too. The man replied, No, not now! Patience Jack Ass, Patience." Allen went on and on telling the same story over and over. The man drank but he would not allow his burro to drink, each time saying, "Patience, Jack Ass, Patience." And Allen went on and on in the same vein for perhaps two or three minutes more. Finally, with some exasperation I said, "Allen please finish the story fast, I have to go." His retort without batting an eye was, "Patience, Jack Ass, Patience."

The second story involves Julie, my daughter. It took place during Christmas week, 1970 when Julie was five years old and in kindergarten. We decided to drive around Eugene to see the various outdoor Christmas decorations that people had put up. And as we did Pat or I would typically say, while pointing, "And that's the Runkel's house, isn't pretty. And look there's the Abbott's house. And there is the Zeigler's house." After seeing quite a number of houses we drove back home and as we did we slowly passed the Condon Elementary School in which Julie had her kindergarten classes. At the school Julie who hadn't said much, in all of her sweetness, said, "look there's my school, it's everybody's house!" Indeed, Julie was so right; school is everybody's house.

Let all of us in educational administration take on Julie's sweet challenge, while keeping Allen's stern admonition upper most in our minds.